## OUR COMMONWEALTH

## Her Past, Her Present and Her Future,

AS VIEWED BY THE GOVERNOR

His Message to the Newly Convened Legislature

SHOWING THE STATE'S CONDITION

And Offering Sugge tions for Improvement and Reform.

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Numerous Defects in the Present Law Pointed Out,

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Governor's Office,

Richmond, Va., Dec. 6, 1803. To the General Assembly of Virginia:

The Constitution of the State reres the General Assembly to meet once Governor or two-thirds of the memof the Legislature, the interests of I am glad to report that the condition of the Commonwealth has been such that, in my judgment, its interests meet the demands upon the State easury, and give the people time to had been enacted so recently, before we began again the work of amending, repealing, and enacting new laws.

for it, and to institute suits for the recovery of the debts due the Penitentiary, Further, he is required on the first day of

Our Financia Condition. I am gratified to be able to say that our financial condition is better than it has been for many years, and it is steadily improving. Our revenue is now ample to meet the regular expenses of the government, sustain the asylums, aid institutions of learning, and continue the present liberni appropriations to the public free schools, pay the interest on the public deb, and provide for our Confederate

The assessment of taxes in 1889, the last year of the preceding administration, was \$2,648,523.13, and in 1896 it was \$3,147,-

06.31—an increase of \$408,983.18.

During the present administration, we During the present administration, we have been at great expense in increasing the capacity of the asylums for the insane; in building barracks at the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College at Blacksburg; in enlarging the cells and workshops at the Virginia Penitentiary, and in the settlement of arrearages due to the school fund. These necessary expenditures required large amounts of the public money, much of which is now converted into permanent improvements belonging to the State. By Judicious management our revenue will be increased hereafter by recipits from the penitentiary, which has beome a paying institution: which has become a paying institution; by the oyster industry, and the rent of the oyster grounds, which have heretofore been sources of expense. Our cities are growing in population and wealth; our railroads are being extended, and the revenues are annually increasing. Besides, there are various reforms by which our expenses could be reduced, which I will point out under the proper headings in this message. I feel, therefore, that I can congratulate the General Assembly upon the condition of our finances, and the encouraging future which is before us, after the long years of financial distress through which we have passed.

The able Beb . The State Debt has been settled to the satisfaction of our creditors. We have agreed to exchange \$19,000,000 of new bonds pe valle 100 years after date, bearing two and three per ceni, thereafter, for \$28,000, 000 of old overdue bonds, the greater part of which bear six per cent, and a few five per cent. Interest, and the balance four per cent. Twenty-four million, five hunper cent. Twenty-four million, five hun-ored and forty-seven thousand, three hun-dred and fifty-eight dollars and twenty-three cents of old bends have been re-ceived in exchange for new bonds, and cancelled. There is still outstanding a small balance of tonds which have not been exchanged, because the limitation given the Board of Commissioners expir-ed before this could be accomplished. Their powers should be promptly renewed for a limited time, so that all of the Their powers should be promptly renewed for a limited time, so that all of the debt may be settled upon the same conditions. Four times the semi-annual interest on the new indebtedness has become due, and at each recurring period the money was promptly paid to the bond-holders, showing the ability of the State to meet the interest when due without increasing the rate of taxation or adding new burdens to the tax-payers, verifying my opinion his to our Ability tos do so, expressed at the time of the settlement. xpressed at the time of the settlement

Curclus of Bonds. I would advise that an Act be pa I would advise that an act of passes authorizing the Commissioners of the Steking Fund to purchase so many of the bonds of the State as they can di-with propriety, using such money as may be spared conveniently from the Treasury after all the Habilities of the State have been satisfied, so that there shall be no in-crease in the amount to be paid in meet-ng the three per cent, interst when it falls due in July, 1901.

The redientlary. gratified at the excellent repor nd third terms; the number seems to it Penitentiary is a necessity. The loss o vicious, and bodily discomfort has no ter-rors for some. Nor does education entirely

eradicate the love of crime.

Expenses. The Penitentiary has been a source of great expense to the State in times past, and few are the years when the Treasury did not contribute to pay, from the taxe of the people, the cost of keeping up the institution. It does seem a little remarkable that the hardy convict, who is incarcerated for crimes committed and comdemned to "hard work and cheap fare," should not be able by his labors to pay the cost of his imprisonment. I have endeavored to discover where the mis management was which brought the in management was which crought the institution so heavily in debt, when so many others, worked with free labor, make immense sums for their owners. I find on investigation that it is due in great part to unwise contracts made under the statute. The ablest bands have been hired o railroads, but no bonds were taken nd not require it, and much money was ost because of this failure. The State clothed, fed, guarded and sup-

plied the convicts with medical attention and medicine, and took in return the worthless bonds or naked promises of the various companies, which have never been redeened. I determined to change this custom, and while the statute did not require me in so many words to take bond and security, but directed me to here out the convicts, and put no restric-tion on my action in this regard, 1 felt it my duty to demand bonds with good security, payable quarterly. This enables the officers to collect the money when due. The result is that, by collecting closely what has been made by their labor, a large surplus has been added to the credit of the institution, after all expenses have

In 1890 there was paid into the Treasury \$18,685.18; in 1891 there was paid into the T. casury \$36,170.18; in 1892 there was paid into the Treasury \$43,250.00; in 1893 there was paid into the Treasury \$28,677.75—the not result of work done at the Peniten-

tlary during these years.

When we remember the stagnation in business of all kinds, the cessation of work on the railroads, and the return of every convict, the report of the officials of the institution for the past year is very gratifying, and I trust that hereafter we will make not less than \$50,000 net annually and have no occasion to make appro-priations to support this institution,

Who Should H re Out Convicts. The Superintendent is required to report

quarterly to the Auditor the amounts due the State for the bire of convicts, etc. withoutit making it the duty of the Auditor to collect these accounts. The statute does not give power to the Superintendent to do so, but he turns the accounts over to the Auditor, and there his duty ends. There should be no room here for doubt as to the duty of either of these officers. as to the duty of either of these officers. A quarterly account should be rendered to the Auditor, to let him see what is due the State from this source of revenue, and the Superintendent should be required to collect all the money due from every source, as shown by his accounts, and after collecting it he should pay it over to the Auditor. The Auditor should collect only from the Superintendent.

Defective Statutes. On these subjects the statutes are de-fective and should be revised. The Super-intendent is the chief executive officer of Treasury, and give the people time to of all the property, real and personal; it is his duty to control it and be responsible and if worthy the Superintendent should

each month to report to the Board of Directors the receipts for hire of the convicts, etc. He is also general purchasing agent, and it is made his special duty tenter into contracts for the employment of the convicts "within the walls of the Penitentiary." Such being the duties of he Superintendent, he should be requir to hire out all the convicts, when they are to be worked within the Penit they are to be worked with the Superint tendent should take charge of all this work, under the advice of the Board of Directors, and hire out all of the conviction. and collect the money for their bire. Auditor is a very busy man, and has n time to see after the collection of the

negligence and delay, a debt once good might be lost. I recommend that the statute be chang payable to the State, with good security and that he be required to collect th money and pay it over to the Auditor of outred to give a sufficient bond in case

there is no authority on him to collect

Convicts' Work,

Humanity requires that the law convicts to be worked on the rai convicts to be worked on the railroads be repealed. The result shows that the ly incident to the work and confin the railroads, is so great that it endance the health and lives of the convicts, an exposes them to a risk to which the were not consigned when they were ren tenced "to hard labor in the Penitentiar, They have not forfeited their lives by labor in an exposed position, where their health may be endangered. By an examination of the reports of the officers of this institution, you will set the difference in the rate of mortality among those who work on the railroads and those who are employed inside the prison, and the differ-

The Shoe Factory.

Influenced in part by these considers penditure without taxing the treasury

When these factories are complete ng than ever; consequently, more dange provide against this state of things, sop-pose an epidemic should prevail among the convicts! What could we do with them To keep them confined would be inhuman to turn them loose upon the cuntry, by pardon, would be to subject innocent per sons to the wrong-doings of these lawless people, which could not be justified nor at some suitable place, and erect on it cheap, but secure prison-house, well protected by a stockade, in which, if it shoul become necessary, the prisoners may be confined, cared for and guarded, at but

of this kind, where the old, the invalids and the boys, who are sent to prison for a time sufficient to learn a trade, could be placed, and required to cultivate the farm and make food for the rest, and thus be a great saving. So, for two reasons—for sanitary purposes, and to enable us to utilize the labor of those who are unable, from any cause, to work in the factories-I recommend that this be done.

Punishments.

The law infficts punishments upon criminals for the protection of society, and to deter others from committing crime, rather than from the hope of reformation upon the part of the criminal. State prison for a length of time proportionate to the enormity of the offence-committed; hence the difference of the is another way in which society hopes to be benefited by the influence of punish ment, and that is by reforming the crim inal. This cannot be done by confine ment alone. I think that you will find, apon investigation of the facts, the crimnal class belongs, in a great measure, to lar, useful employment. They have no credit; they have lost favor with the people, and they endeavor to revenge themselves upon society (which they de spise) and attempt to live in utter disre-

gard of the laws and of the rights of Now to remedy this it is necessary to change their habits of life. Where they have been worthiess and lazy, they should be taught to be systematic and regular II their work; where they have no employ-ment, they should be made to learn a trade, or do something which is useful and in this way, when their terms of coninement are ended, they may become good citizens. The labor required of them in prison should have reference to this, and every convict confined in the Penitentiary should be taught to work at something which will be valuable to him, and enable him to make a living when he is distacharged. The young convicts should be taught to read and write also. Their minds will, in this way, be turned into a different channel, and this may fit them to perform

the duties of honest citizens.

When convicts are discharged from prison they are looked upon with dis-favor by those who know that they have been in prison, and preference is given to others who are not so efficient, because of their former bad conduct. Therefore, they should be trained in such a way, if to give them employment in some

knowledge of business, the master of no knowledge of business, the master of no trafe, ignorant of any useful employment, what is to become of him? There is a universal prejudice against him. Society excludes him; he knows nothing of business; be has a fiving to make but no friends, no means, and no employment. He is subjected again to temptation because of his helplessness, and he is forced by his necessities to make war on society. by his necessities to make war on society. and as a natural result he becomes wors than he was before his punishment. Youths in Prison,

Youthe in Frison,
Youthe in Frison,
There are in the Virginia Peniteniary
129 young persons who are under the age
of twenty-one years. How many there are
in the common jalls of the country I have
not been able to ascertain. A number of
them have every natural qualification to
become useful clixeos, if properly trained
and educated. Much can be done during
their confirement, that when liberated
they may be able 55 obtain employment they may be able to obtain employment

If the Legislature would pass a law erve out his term in the penitentiary of the juli, and no credit should be given or that portion of the term of sentence od conduct, and the fear of a recal when induced to go astray.

Criminal Expenses, Our criminal expenses are enormous, and are increasing. The decision in the Court of Appeals in the case of Miller vs. the State (88th. Va. Rep. p. 618) decided in January, 1802, restricting the isdiction of justices, has added to should be provided to diminish

180) the criminal expenses were In 1870, 3149,766,26; In 1889, \$278, in 1890, \$361,854.51; in 1892, \$315,727.51

carefully considered this ques my message to the General As in December, 1891, and after due d-ration adhere to my opinion there exact, and am now satisfied if the islature will adopt the remedies then gested, it will result in a diminution these experses. I again recommend: raminal expenses be apportioned be-ween cities and countles and the State. ding to wealth and population, Make the party who causes a need-

ess prosecution pay the costs.

3. Require the Superintendent of the benillemany to send for convicts.

4. Enlarge the jurisdiction of justices.

is soon as the new amendments to the Constitution are adopted. reasons for these recommendations ou will find in a former message.

I have endeavored to get the exact

of far as they have responded, the report shows that a greater part of the in lictments found are unnecessary. If only the guilty were indicted and tried, the criminal expenses would be reduced to amount equal to that paid by the ate in 1870, viz: \$149,706,28, or perhaps ight be reduced to \$77,884.00, the same as was in 1800. Two-thirds of thos dicted for felonies are acquitted, and if the criminal expenses were reduced in the same proportion, they should be less than they were in 1850 or 1870. A circular let-ter was addressed to fae clerk of every county and city in the State, making in-pulry as to the number of prosecutions their respective counties and cities lighty-seven countles and rix cities have responded to the inquiry, and the report October 1st, 1891, and ending October 1st 1892, there were 1.273 indictments for fel ony, and only 473 convictions; the number 2.114, and the number of convictions for misdemeaners, 1,234, conclusively showing the large number of improper prosecu-tions, and the impropriety of the present policy of paying officers by the case, to prosecute the citizen, whether guilty or innocent, instead of allowing a fixed

Our Oyster Interests. The people of the State are taking a deeper interest in this great industry than formerly, and the local prejudice against legislation on the subject is wearing out. I trust it will not be long

efficiency and of good conduct, when discharged. These things will enable a convict, in part at least, to overcome the torologice against his class, and enable aim, if worthy, to start life anew. But if he is turned horse upon society, with no knowledge of husiness, the master of no trade, knowledge of any useful environment. perity as she has never before known.

It is nacless to expect, however, that this interest will receive at the hands of the Legislature efficient protection, unless those who are engaged in it are willing to bear a reasonable proportion of the expenses necessary to secure it; and the old idea that the property of the peo-ple of the whole State, alone, is to be taxed to give protection to those who are engaged in this business, will be deemed

Rent\_No Taxes We create a prejudice on the subject of renting out this property to raise money for its protection and other equitable purposes, by calling it a tax. This is a misomer. These are the facts: we have a large area of oyster land, which belongs to the State. It is over the fact in the property of the pro to the State; it is ours in fee simple; its great extent and value is conceded; we propose to rent this land to the citizens of Virginia at the low price of one dollar per acre. We compel no man to take it, and if the citizen rents this land at a stipulated price, he does it of his own free will, and can, in no proper sense, be free will, and can, in no proper sense, be called a tax-payer. It is not taxes he is paying to the State; it is rent money; he does it voluntarily, and he has no right to complain, and allege that this increases the tax he owes to the State. On the other hand, it would be a misuse of its powers for the State to tax every hind of recovery belonging to the efficer. kind of property belonging to the citizen according to its value in order to raise the necessary amount to meet the demands upon the Treasury, and fail to utilize such vast amounts of valuable property as she owns in her oyster lands, and allow it to go to waste, or to be seized by those who use and abuse it, and who not only do not make an equitable division of the profits, but all the other property of the citizen is taxed thousands of dollars to protect them in their unlawful holdings.

It can not be justified. That the Legislature should use all available property and resources which the State owns, be-fore it has a right to take, by taxation, any of the resources of the private citi-zens for public uses, is a proposition which will not be disputed. The indifference manifested heretofore by the peo ple of the whole State, is a surprise to every thinking man. It is the result of a want of knowledge on this subject. No one better understood this question than Governor Wise. He was born and reared among the people of that section; he was devoted to their interests, and was es-teemed and beloved by them, and ho one has been more enthusiastic in declaring its great value. He was the first to suggest that a large revenue could be derived from it, and urged it.

The time has come when it is nece sary for us to have efficient legislation on the subject. The necessities of the State require it, and the oyster interests deare being visited by strange vessels who are plundering our oyster-grounds and robbing our rivers, and begging that protection should be given to them." How can you get the protection?

The devastation which the strangers are committing is in the Virginia waters, and the grounds they are trespassing on are the oyster-lands of Virginia. I think vigorous measures should at once be adopted; the cry of the people should be an twered, Virginia ought to assert her rights This cannot be done without expense. To raise money to enable us to do this, these lands should be rented, and when this is done, it will at once become the impera-tive duty of the State to grant the protection which is so greatly needed by her citizens, and as much of the money as is necessary for this purpose should be taken and devoted to the defence of the and devoted to the defence of the property which Virginia has temporarily conceded to its occupants. Lay asid prejudice, and look fairly at the question Lay uside Is it right that property all over the State should be taxed to protect the eyster interest, while the oyster grounds belonging to the State—not to individuals—are seized and used at will by the people, many of whom not only make no returns to the State for their use, but de mand that we protect them in the unau-thorized, and hence unlawful possession, at our own cost? This is unreasonable. I repeat with emphasis, every oyste int-rest should be efficiently protected the rights of the people should be cap-tured and punished, and the use of all of our valuable possessions on the water, and in the water, should be as efficiently guarded as the property on the land, or the land itsel. Many laws have been enacted, looking

in a measure to this, but they have been inefficient, and the pillaging is still

with the inefficiency of the law, and are demanding protection. Let me give you some of the facts, so that you may see how inadequate the law has been. We will look to the results in figures. This books, showing the amount received from

	I		Recei	Receipts.		Disburse- ments.		
080		5	203	20	8		26	
SI.			542	53		17	54	
12			1,249	62		299	52	
83	************		1,249	62		200	52	
11	*****		919	93	18	.907	97	
55			26,470	93	27	.025	66	
565	*************		22,949		22	.574	25	
87			13,329			712		
88	***************************************		13,755		18	922	82	
50	*************		12,454		1:0	,561	74	
91	************		14,114		24	,683	92	
92	************		15,236	04	16	,994	22	
93	************				17	.017	58	

edged right of Virginia in this projecty the need of protection, and the inefficiency of the law, and the consequent demand for amendment, and what the people should expect of the present Legislature. I have not the space to enlarge on these facts as I should like.

Since th Last Legislature.

The last Legislature passed a law on the subject which was imperfect in many respects, but was an improvement on the old law. I hope it will receive a thorough examination, and that such amendments will be made as are demanded by the

present necessities.

As soon as possible after the adjournment, the Board of the Chesapeake repaired to Washington, and had a conference with Colonel McDonald, the States Fish Commisioner, and Professor Mendenhal, of the Coast Survey. These gentlemen showed great interest in the work the State was doing, and did all they could to forward her interests. The thanks of the General Assembly are due to these prominent officials of the Federal government, for services rendered to the Colonel McDonald kindly gave us the

Colonel McDonald kindly gave us the use of a steamer, with its officers, which was indispensable to the work which the State required to be done. Professor Mendonhal, of the Coast Survey, allowed us to select from the able and accomplished men of his Department, Professor Baylor, from Virginia, who was at that time about completing some work in Mobile Bay, and we were compelled to delay our survey for a short time to secure his services.

It was impossible to complete the work

be required to give a certificate of efficiency and of good conduct, when discharged. These things will enable a convict, in part at least, to overcome the prejudice against his class, and enable him, if worthy, to start life anew. But if ed and the State's interests looked after, or there will be such a destruction of the all deserve the thanks of the General As-sembly for the efficient services they have isndered in preparing the useful maps and surveys of all the syster lands belonging to Virginia, and thus furnishing belonging to virginia, and that starts and an intelligent basis for any disposition we propose to make of those lands, and enabling us with accuracy to delineate the surveys of each holder of oyster lands, as they are marked out by the proper authorities.

Defect in the Law.

It would encumber this message too It would encumber this message too much for me to discuss minutely the legislation we now have on the subject, and I must be content to make a brief allusion to the same, and its most important defects. So much of the law as creates the Board of the Chesapeake, with its powers, should be repealed. This Board is composed of the Governor, the First Auditor and the Treasurer. These gentlemen have as much as they can do. gentlemen have as much as they can do, and my experience satisfies me that they have not sufficient time to devote to such

without seriously neglecting duties more properly belonging to their offices.

(i.) This Board should be dissolved, and Its duties assigned to another officer who should be selected by the Legislature, of whom I shall speak more particularly hereafter.

hereafter.

(2) The vessels now used as a force to guard and protect our oyster Interests, should be disposed of, as unfit for that purpose. Others better suited should be selected, and they should be controlled in

(3.) Sec. 2134 of the Code of Virginia, in relation to inspectors and their duty, should be amended so as to embrace rents, thus giving a quick remedy, and

rents, thus giving a quick remedy, and not requiring the inspectors to get a distress warrant in every case. It is slow, inconvenient and costly. If the present law is retained, this section should be amended, as suggested.

(4.) The inspectors should not be apointed by the judges of the County Courts. They have no special interest in this work, and are in no way responsible for the efficiency of the law or its execution. It imposes upon them a duty which does It imposes upon them a duty which does is executed will be apparent upon an in-

citizens of Virginia to rent the oyster lands, and to engage in oyster culture, satisfies me that there are not now sufficient resources among the people to cul-tivate it all. There is also such a draft on the Treasury that they should be test-ed out to raise revenue. It will be better also for the planters, because as much lawless trespassers; and the oyste's en-such places will be an inducement for them to gather there, and to go forth at unexpected times to prey upon the pro-

I would therefore, advise that the com-missioner, after a reasonable time, he al-lowed to rent to persons who are not citizens, such parts as have not been taken up, but he should in no case give to such non-resident a lower price than that offered to a citizen of the State.

Assessors and Collegues, There should be appointed by the Shell assessors and collectors, so as to hastre the faithful enrolment of all the syster lands, with the names of the occupants and the number and kind of vessels engaged in oystering and fishing, and the col-

er, one with the Clerk of the county, and one with the Auditor of Public Accounts. It is asserted that a large amount of rent and revenue which could, with a little care, be collected, is never realized, because of the inefficiency and indifference of the proper officers; and some which is collected is never accounted for. There is no way to ascertain the facts, ecause of the imperfection in the present law. This should be remedied. The law should be so amended as to make it conform as nearly as possible to the law now in force for the assessing and collecting of ne other revenues of the State.

The captains of the vessels would be the proper persons to collect this revenue, and the assessors should be appointed by the Shell Fish Commissioner.

Shell Fish Commissioner.

After examining the question, I am sat-sited that this subject should be taken from the Board of the Chesapeake, and rom the County Court, and it should beome by law a separate and distinct department of the government.

There should be placed at its head an efficient man, who has the energy and ability to make himself acquainted with this great interest, with the courage to sforce it strictly. He should be so well paid as to demand the services of an efficer of ability to organize and manage whole fish and oyster interest of the

He should be elected by the Legislature for a term of four years, thus giving him an opportunity to show his ability, and he should be removed by the Governor for naifeasance or mistensance, or inefficiency in his office. He should be allowed a sufficient number

of assistants or deputies to enable him to enforce the law; to rent out their privilege which may be granted, touching the question.

He should be required to register the

vessels engaged in catching fish, oysters, crabs and clams, and all other things which live in the waters of Virginia, and are the subjects of legislation.

There should be put at his command three or more steam launches, well armed, for the pu-pose of protecting our property, our people and our waters from all intruders, and for enforcing the laws of the

After a trial for years, our police boats have shown their inefficiency, and they should be sold, and the money used to rocure suitable vessels for the purpose at \$5,000 each, and they will be sufficient

to do the work we desire.

Our present facilities are not suitable: two are sail vessels; they are slow and unwieldly and are dependent upon the wind and tidez. Our steamboat is too neavy; the draft is too great, and it is unsuitable for the work required. It sho be sold also, and the vessels suggested should be procured in their places.

Then we should require that every legal right of the oysterman be protected and the rights of the State, and the Commissioner should be compelled to see that the law is executed.

The fish and oyster interest of Tide-water is not alone interested in this im-portant undertaking. The Commissioner ould see that the interior streams and should see that the interior strains and ponds are kept stocked with suitable fish, and all obstacles in the way of the run-ning fish should be removed. The poison-ing of the water should be prohibited, and the violators of the law be punished.

oyster interest should be watched, guard-ed and taken care of by him. To better enable him to do this, he should be re-quired to establish his office in Norfolk, or at some convenient point on the sea-

A bond with proper security should be taken from him, similar to those exacted from the other officers of the State, and he should be allowed to appoint his own assistants or deputies, who should be responsible to him for the manner to which they perform their duties, and he should be responsible for them, to the State. The rent money and all other moneys belonging to the state, should be promptly collected by him and paid over to the Awiltor as quickly as possible, and he should be required to settle with the Auditor just as the treasurers of the counting are treasurers of the counties are quired to do.

## Revenue from this Source.

The survey of the syster grounds of the Chesapeake and its tributaries has been recently completed. This important work has been done with but little cost to the State. It should have been done years ago. It shows the greatness of our undeveloped resources, and must strength-en our credit and increase the value of

our bonds We have 150,000 acres of natural bed or rocks, which are of inestimable value; they should be held for the benefit of the people of Virginia, and no dredge or scrape should be adowed on them. We have 650,000 acres, including Chesapeake Hay proper, suitable for planting, which can be rented by the citizens of the State at one dollar per acre. This estimate does not embrace the eys-

ter grounds on the ocean side of the counties of Accomac and Northampton, which are large in acreage and very val-

The marsh lands have not been considered; these in due time will be made 18 valuable as the grounds now used for planting; experts say they will be more certain to produce uniform erops under improved cultivation. I think it would be safe to estimate the number of acres suitable for oyster cultivation at about one million.

Rent these at a dollar per acre, and what a reyal revenue it will bring to the State. It may be said that you can not find renters? Then rereal the law which restricts renting to the citizen, after a reasonable time is given them to secure the grounds, and invite foreign capital to come in, and it will not be long before we will be able to dispose of every acre. Many of the new comers will bring

their families and erect homes along the shores; the large and uncultivated farms will be divided and sold; new ideas and methods will be introduced among our people, and soon prosperity will take the has so long existed. The trucker on the shore, and the oys-terman on the water, the products of the

land vying with the products of the water-what a source of undeveloped wealth; what inducements they offer to the world. But this is not all. You have ten thous

and tongers and dredgers and others engaged in the fish and oyster industry, who, when picperly taxed, will add large-ly to the revenues of the State, if effi-cient means are used in the assessment and collection. Nothing but the worst management can present large revenue. management can prevent large revenues from these sources, larger than as now have from railroads, or from licenses, or from personal property, or from any other source, except real estate. Is not this sufficient to direct the constant and carnest efforts of the General Assembly of Virginia to this important subject.

Lunatic Asylums.

In my regular message to the General Assembly in December, 1891, I called at-tention to the great increase from year to year in the number of lunatics confined in the State asylums, and the addi-tional appropriations which would be re-cessary to support these insalutions A statute was enacted by the last Legislature instructing the appoint a commission, to be composed of three learned and expert physicians to examine and inquire or not any different system of laws ought to be enacted as to the admission of patients into the admission of patients the various asylums of the Comm wealth; and also whether there are

tients in said asyloms who should not be confined therin as insure persons." In obedience to this statute, I appointed a commission, composed of Dr. Parker of Richmond, Dr. Wiley, of Salem, and Dr. Mclivaine, of Petersburg, to make an examination and report the result of

their investigations.

These gentiemen have made a careful examination of the asylums, and have prepared an able report of the facts ascertained by them-a copy of which will accompany this message-with various suggestions to remedy the evils which they have discovered. They find all the asylums well managed, and bodily health of the patients remarkamore than twenty were found in bed. The commission speaks in terms of admiration of the organization and management of each of the asylums.

Examination of Lucatics, my message above referred to, I commented upon certain defects in the present law, and the evil results connected with it, and advised a change. In this view the committee and all of the super-intendents concur. I will examine the law as it now exists, and point out some

of its defects.
The Code of Virginia, Sec. 1609, declares that when "Any justice who suspects any person in his county or corporation to be a lunatic, shall issue his warrant ordering such person to be bro before him. He and two other jus shall inquire whether such person be a lunatic, and for that purpose summon his physician (if any) and any other

witnesses."
All this takes place in the county or All this takes place in the county or city, and may be in private, and no doubt it is in general, and there is no record kept of the proceedings. The number of witnesses necessary to convict a party of lunacy and what evidence is required, the law does not declare. Suppose the party has no physician, the statute does not require one to be sent for, or to be present, nor does it require that there should necessarily a any witness present. The statute then says that these three justices shall inquire whether such a

person may be a lunatic.

There is no demand that any witnesses shall be present a the time of the exam-ination, or if present that they shall be

shall be present a the time of the stamination, or if present that they shall be sworn, or that they shall be examined after they are sworn.

Suppose the evidence shows that the party is not a lunatic but an idiot: The justices may look at the Fifth section of the Code, and they will see that an insane person "may be an idiot, lunatic, non compos, or deranged," and under a misconception of their duties, the idiot may be sent to the asylum as a lunatic, which is expressly forbidden by statute. (See Code of Virginia, p. 441, Sec. 1681.)

It rarely ever happens, I am informed, that a party is refused admittance late an asylum after the justice has passed upon the question of his lunacy; or that an idiot is ever returned to the county or city from which he is sent under a mistaken idea of the law, as the statute requires, but they are received, both the lunatic and the idiot, at the expense of the State, when, in fact, lunatics are a charge upon the State, if unable to pay

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